

APPENDIX 5: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH STANDARDS

The *Standards for Public Health in Washington State* include one set of standards that cover environmental health, referred to as “Assuring a safe and healthy environment for people.” During 2004, environmental health directors from several local health jurisdictions worked with staff from the Washington State Department of Health to revise some of the measures. These revised measures will be used in the 2005 standards measurement.

Standard EH1

Environmental health education is a planned component of public health programs.

Local measures:

- EH1.1L Information is available about environmental health, including compliance requirements, through brochures, flyers, newsletters, websites, or other mechanisms.
- EH1.2L The community and stakeholders are involved in appropriate ways in addressing environmental health issues, including through presentations or individual technical assistance.
- EH1.3L Environmental health education information in all forms (including technical assistance) is reviewed at least annually and updated, expanded or contracted as needed based on revised regulations, changes in community needs, etc.
- EH1.4L The critical components of all environmental health activities are identified and used as the basis for education that is provided. Workshops and other in-person trainings (including technical assistance) are evaluated to determine effectiveness.

State measures:

- EH1.1S Information is provided to the public about the availability of state level environmental health through brochures, flyers, newsletters, websites, or other mechanisms.
- EH1.2S Stakeholders are involved in appropriate ways in addressing environmental health issues, including through presentations or technical assistance.
- EH1.3S Environmental health education information in all forms (including technical assistance) is reviewed at least annually, and is updated, expanded, or contracted as needed based on revised regulations, changes in stakeholder needs, etc.
- EH1.4S Environmental health education is provided in conformance with needs of stakeholders, as identified through meetings, surveys, or other assessment means. Environmental health education is assessed for effectiveness through evaluations of participants, surveys, or other means.
- EH1.5S Staff members conducting environmental health education have skills (health education, communication, etc.) as evidenced by job descriptions, resumes, or training documentation.

Standard EH2

Services are available throughout the state to respond to environmental events or natural disasters that threaten the public's health.

Local measures:

- EH2.1L Information is provided to the public on how to contact local jurisdictions to report environmental health threats or

public health emergencies 24 hours a day.

- EH2.2L Environmental health threats and public health emergencies are included in the local emergency response plan. After a public health emergency response involving environmental health occurs, environmental health staff are included in the local jurisdiction after-action debrief. Any changes to the response plan affecting environmental health response are documented.
- EH2.3L Environmental health services that are critical to access in different types of emergencies are identified. Public education and outreach includes information on how to access these critical services. After-action debrief includes a review of the accessibility of those services, and any changes necessary are made and documented.
- EH2.4L There is a plan that details the roles and responsibilities for local health jurisdiction staff in a natural disaster or other public health emergency that both stands alone and is part of the local emergency response plan. All local health jurisdiction staff receive annual training on their respective duties.

State measures:

- EH2.1S Information is provided to the public on how to report environmental health threats or public health emergencies, 24 hours a day; this includes a phone number.
- EH2.2S Environmental health threats and public health emergencies are included in the emergency response plan. After a public health emergency response involving environmental health occurs, environmental health staff are included in the after-action debrief. Any changes to the response plan affecting environmental health response are documented.
- EH2.3S Written procedures are maintained and disseminated for how to obtain consultation and technical assistance

regarding emergency preparedness for environmental events or natural disasters that threaten the public's health. Procedures are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of these emergency response plans. Plans or procedures are revised based on event debriefing findings and recommendations.

- EH2.4S There is a plan that describes Department of Health internal roles and responsibilities for environmental events or natural disasters that threaten the health of the people. There is a clear link between this plan and other state and local emergency response plans.
- EH2.5S Appropriate Department of Health program staff are trained in risk communication and the DOH emergency response plan, as evidenced by training documentation.

Standard EH3

Both environmental health risks and environmental health illnesses are tracked, recorded, and reported.

Local measures:

- EH3.1L Environmental health data are available for community groups and other local agencies to review.
- EH3.2L Key indicators of environmental health risks and illnesses are identified. A system is in place for reporting of any suspected environmental health illnesses based on those indicators, and reporting is tracked to monitor trends. A system is in place to assure the data are shared with appropriate local, state and regional agencies.
- EH3.3L Public requests, board of health testimony, compliance rates, and other data and information are used to determine what internal or external quality improvements may be needed. If needed, a plan is developed to institute needed changes over time.

State measures:

- EH3.1S Coordination to develop environmental health indicators and data standards is provided.
- EH3.2S Key indicators of environmental health risks and illnesses are identified. A system is in place for reporting of any suspected environmental health illnesses based on those indicators, and reporting is tracked to monitor trends. A system is in place to assure the data are shared with appropriate local, regional, state, and national agencies.
- EH3.3S Public requests, testimony before the State Board of Health, compliance rates, and other data and information are used to determine what internal or external quality improvements may be needed. If needed, a plan is developed to institute changes over time.

Standard EH4

Compliance with public health regulations is sought through enforcement actions.

Local measures:

- EH4.1L Written policies, local ordinances, administrative codes, and enabling laws are accessible to the public.
- EH4.2L There are written procedures to follow for enforcement actions. The procedures specify the type of documentation needed to take an enforcement action, which conforms with local policies, ordinances, and state laws.
- EH4.3L A selected number of enforcement actions are evaluated each year to determine compliance with and effectiveness of enforcement procedures. If needed, procedures are revised.

- EH4.4L Enforcement actions are logged (tracked) from the initial report, through the investigation, findings, and enforcement action and are reported to other agencies as required.
- EH4.5L Appropriate environmental health staff are trained on enforcement procedures.

State measures:

- EH4.1S Written policies, local ordinances, laws, and administrative codes are accessible to the public.
- EH4.2S Information about best practices in environmental health compliance activity is gathered and disseminated or posted to agency's website, including, as appropriate, form templates, time frames, interagency coordination steps, hearing procedures, citation issuance and documentation requirements.
- EH4.3S There are written procedures to follow for enforcement actions. The procedures specify the type of documentation needed to take an enforcement action, which conforms with state law.
- EH4.4S There is a documented process for periodic review of enforcement actions and a selected number of enforcement actions are evaluated each year to determine compliance with and effectiveness of enforcement procedures. If needed, procedures are revised.
- EH4.5S Enforcement actions are logged (tracked) from the initial report through the investigation, findings, and enforcement action, and they are reported to other agencies as required.
- EH4.6S Appropriate environmental health staff are trained on enforcement procedures, as evidenced by training documentation.